

39. *Cistothorus stellaris*. SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN.— One taken at South Windsor May 6. Others were noted at South Windsor on July 15–16 and August 1. C. W. Vibert informed me that this little colony had been there for several years.

40. *Sitta canadensis*. RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.— Late record: one female taken at Norwalk, on May 15.

41. *Vermivora lawrencei*. LAWRENCE'S WARBLER.— On May 20 I went on a trip to Wilton with the Norwalk Bird Club. Mr. Smith and Mr. Hall found a Lawrence's Warbler and called the rest of us to see it. The bird was very tame and remained in some low bushes for some time while the entire party gathered about to watch it.

42. *Vermivora leucobronchialis*. BREWSTER'S WARBLER.— One seen in Norwalk in some bushes by the roadside on May 26.

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## NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

### III.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

THIS article is a continuation of the author's remarks on various North American birds.<sup>1</sup> In the following pages there are notes on two genera, one species, and two subspecies. For the loan of certain specimens used, the writer is indebted to Dr. L. C. Sanford.

#### **Bannermania** Mathews and Iredale.

The genus *Bannermania* has recently been proposed<sup>2</sup> as a monotypic group for the reception of *Oceanodroma hornbyi* (Gray).<sup>3</sup> Examination of recently collected material of this species has offered

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<sup>1</sup> For the preceding papers of this series, see 'The Auk,' XXXIV, April, 1917, pp. 191–196; and XXXIV, July, 1917, pp. 321–329.

<sup>2</sup> Mathews and Iredale, *Ibis*, ser. 10, III, No. 3, July, 1915, p. 57S.

<sup>3</sup> *Thalassidroma Hornbyi* Gray, *Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.*, 1853 (July 25, 1854), p. 62 (north-west coast of America).

an opportunity to determine the validity of the characters adduced for this separation. In the type specimen the wing formula is said by Messrs. Mathews and Iredale to differ from that of the other species of *Oceanodroma* in having the first (outermost) primary equal to the third, and much longer than the fourth. In one specimen we have examined, the first primary is very much shorter than the third and also decidedly shorter than the fourth. A similar discrepancy in the relative length of the primaries occurs in other species of *Oceanodroma*, such as *Oceanodroma furcata* and *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, in which species the first is sometimes longer, occasionally shorter, than the fourth. From these facts we must conclude that the proportion of the primaries in birds of this group is of no value as a generic character. The tarsus in *Oceanodroma hornbyi* is almost exactly equal to the middle toe with claw, and is thus of the same proportions as in *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The wings and tail are like those of *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, and some of the tail-feathers are slightly scalloped at their tips, as is not infrequently the case in *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, and commonly and most noticeably so in *Oceanodroma furcata*. The bill seems to be rather slender and relatively long, but in this respect it is practically equalled by some specimens of *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* and other species. In coloration this species is very different from all the other forms of the genus *Oceanodroma*, but since it seems to possess no peculiar trenchant structural characters, its generic separation on the ground of coloration alone seems to be unwarranted, and its name should, therefore, remain *Oceanodroma hornbyi*.

This species is at present relegated to the hypothetical list of North American birds, on the ground that the alleged locality, "northwest coast of America," is doubtful. Since, however, it is known that Admiral Hornby, who obtained the type specimen during the period of his command on the Pacific Station, had his headquarters on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, there seems to be no reasonable doubt of the correctness of the locality. In view of these facts, the species should be restored to a place in the regular list of North American birds.

### **Cymochorea** Coues.

The subgenus *Cymochorea* Coues<sup>1</sup> has recently been raised to generic rank to include all the species now under *Occanodroma* Reichenbach, except the type of the latter, *Occanodroma furcata* (Gmelin).<sup>2</sup> A careful examination of the species of *Occanodroma* discloses the fact that there is no structural distinction between *Occanodroma furcata* and the other species of the genus, with exception of the slightly scalloped tips of the rectrices and the rather narrower ends of the outer pair. Furthermore, these peculiarities are indicated in some specimens of *Occanodroma leucorhoa* and *Occanodroma hornbyi*, though never developed to so great a degree as in *Occanodroma furcata*. Moreover, the difference in color between *Occanodroma furcata* and the remaining species now included in the group is scarcely deserving of weight in generic separation, in view of the fact that species of such diverse coloration as members of the genus *Puffinus* and its closely allied groups have been by previous authors, as well as by Messrs. Mathews and Iredale, and we think properly, placed in the same genus. In this particular case it seems to us that neither the slight and not wholly constant structural character of the rectrices, nor the somewhat different coloration is sufficiently important to entitle *Cymochorea* Coues to generic rank; and it, therefore, should remain, as at present, a subgenus of *Occanodroma*.

### **Sula dactylatra californica** Rothschild.

This new subspecies was recently described by Dr. Walter Rothschild<sup>3</sup> from San Benedicto Island, in the Revillagigedo group, off the coast of western Mexico. Its geographic range was given by the original describer as the "coasts of California and Central America," but without any definite localities outside the Revillagigedo Islands. Since, therefore, there is no evidence that this new race has ever been taken in either California or Lower Cali-

<sup>1</sup> *Cymochorea* Coues, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1864, p. 75 (type by original designation, *Procellaria leucorhoa* Vieillot).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mathews and Iredale, Ibis, ser. 10, III, No. 3, July, 1915, pp. 574-581.

<sup>3</sup> Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, XXXV, No. CCIII, January 27, 1915, p. 43.

ifornia, we must, notwithstanding the implication contained in the subspecific term "*californica*," exclude it from the list of North American birds.

### ***Fregata aquila* Linnæus.**

The name *Fregata aquila* Linnæus,<sup>1</sup> under which the frigate bird of North America has heretofore passed, now proves to be applicable only to the bird of Ascension Island in the South Atlantic Ocean.<sup>2</sup> The bird of the West Indies, and therefore of the southeastern United States, thus left without a name, Mr. Mathews proposed to call *Fregata minor minor* Gmelin,<sup>3</sup> by fixing the type locality of the latter as the West Indies.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Walter Rothschild has shown, however, that the type locality of *Pelecanus minor* Gmelin is undoubtedly in the Eastern Hemisphere, and he has restricted it to the eastern half of the Indian Ocean.<sup>5</sup>

For the West Indian bird Dr. Rothschild uses the name *Fregata magnificens* Mathews, which he considers a species distinct from *Fregata minor* Gmelin, although originally described as a subspecies of the latter.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Mathews, however, still maintaining the West Indian bird to be different from *Fregata magnificens magnificens* of the Galapagos Islands, called it provisionally *Fregata minor rothschildi*, so that in case Dr. Rothschild should prove to be correct in the shifting of the type locality from the West Indies to the Indian Ocean, the West Indian bird would be provided with a name.<sup>7</sup> All the specimens of *Fregata* that the present writer has been able to examine from the West Indies are undoubtedly specifically identical with *Fregata magnificens* Mathews, and are likewise specifically distinct from *Fregata minor* Gmelin. Mr. Mathews

<sup>1</sup> *Pelecanus aquilus* Linnæus, Syst. Nat., ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Mathews, Austral Avian Record, II, No. 6, December 19, 1914, pp. 117-118; Rothschild, Novit. Zool., XXII, February 12, 1915, pp. 145-146.

<sup>3</sup> *Pelecanus minor* Gmelin, Syst. Nat., I, ii, 1789, p. 572.

<sup>4</sup> Austral Avian Record, II, No. 6, December 19, 1914, p. 118; Birds Australia, IV, part 3, June 23, 1915, pp. 240-281.

<sup>5</sup> Novit. Zool., XXII, February 12, 1915, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> *Fregata minor magnificens* Mathews, Austral Avian Record, II, No. 6, December 19, 1914, p. 120 (Barrington, Indefatigable, and Albemarle islands, Galapagos Islands); Birds Australia, IV, part 3, June 23, 1915, p. 269 (type said to be from Culpepper Island, Galapagos Islands).

<sup>7</sup> *Fregata minor rothschildi* Mathews, Birds Australia, IV, part 3, June 23, 1915, p. 280 (Aruba Island, Caribbean Sea).

is, however, correct in saying that the West Indian birds differ from *Fregata magnificens* of the Galapagos Islands, since they average much smaller, particularly in length of wings and tail; but this difference is clearly not specific, as the extreme measurements overlap in the two forms. The possibility that there are really two distinct species in the West Indies is suggested by Mr. Mathews' remarks and his contention that the West Indian bird is a subspecies of *Fregata minor*; but, until this be proved, the bird of the West Indies, Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the coasts of the southeastern United States must be called *Fregata magnificens rothschildi* Mathews.

The frigate bird of the central Pacific Ocean has recently been separated from that of the Indian Ocean by Mr. Mathews<sup>1</sup> as *Fregata minor palmerstoni* (Gmelin).<sup>2</sup> Birds from the coasts of California and Lower California belong clearly to this race, which we therefore should add to our North American list.

Thus, for North America, we shall have two species, instead of the single *Fregata aquila* Linnæus: an Atlantic form, *Fregata magnificens rothschildi* Mathews, and a Pacific bird, *Fregata minor palmerstoni* (Gmelin).

### ***Bubo virginianus wapacuthu* (Gmelin).**

The name *Strix wapacuthu* Gmelin<sup>3</sup> was some time ago employed by the writer<sup>4</sup> for the Arctic Horned Owl, *Bubo arcticus* Swainson. Subsequently Mr. William Brewster questioned this identification,<sup>5</sup> and referred this name as a synonym to *Nyctea nyctea*. Mr. Ridgway has recently<sup>6</sup> again revived *Bubo virginianus wapacuthu* (Gmelin), and used it for the Arctic Horned Owl in place of *Bubo virginianus subarcticus* Hoy, or *Bubo virginianus arcticus* Swainson,

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<sup>1</sup> Austral Avian Record, II, No. 6, December 19, 1914, p. 119; Birds Australia, IV, part 3, June 23, 1915, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Pelecanus Palmerstoni* Gmelin, Syst. Nat., I, ii, 1789, p. 573 (Palmerston Island, Pacific Ocean).

<sup>3</sup> Syst. Nat., I, i, 1788, p. 291 (Hudson Bay).

<sup>4</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXVII, 1904, pp. 191-192.

<sup>5</sup> Mem. Nutt. Orn. Club, IV, 1906, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 53, part VI, April 8, 1914, p. 751.

which latter Dr. C. W. Richmond had shown to be preoccupied.<sup>1</sup> In view of this recent action of Mr. Ridgway's, the writer has taken pains to go over the matter again; and the result of this investigation seems fully to substantiate Mr. Brewster's position. The name *Strix wapacuthu* Gmelin was based on the "wapacuthu owl" of Pennant,<sup>2</sup> hence the identification of his description must determine the identity of Gmelin's name. While Pennant's description superficially suggests the Arctic form of *Bubo virginianus*, a careful reading shows that the bird described must be the Snowy Owl, *Nyctea nyctea*. In addition to other details, including the fact that Pennant's bird is specifically said to be without ears, the statements that the bill is glossy black, and that the "space between the eyes, cheeks, and throat" is "white; the ends of the feathers on the head black," clearly show that the description could not apply to any form of *Bubo virginianus*, but must refer to *Nyctea nyctea*. In view of this, the proper name for the Arctic Great Horned Owl should remain *Bubo virginianus subarcticus* Hoy.

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., XV, 1902, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Arctic Zool., II, 1785, p. 231.